

Message Text

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60

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 /088 W

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R 271637Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9682

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 14087

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US, IT

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: STATE 211862

1. COMING AS IT DID IN THE MIDST OF THE SUMMER VACATION DOLDRUMS, THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT DID NOT ELICIT MAJOR REACTIONS WITHIN ITALY. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED PRESS, NEWSPAPERS GENERALLY REPORTED THE INCIDENT FACTUALLY, NOT QUESTIONING THE UN COMMEND'S VERSION OF THE KILLINGS OF THE TWO AMERICAN OFFICERS. THE SUBSEQUENT MILITARY BUILD-UP AND STATE OF ALERT WERE TREATED AS LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF AN INCIDENT INITIATED BY THE NORTH KOREANS. PREDICATABLY, THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY'S DAILY L'UNITA FROM THE BEGINNING HAS PARROTED NORTH KOREA'S LINE ON THE INCIDENT, TALKING OF THE "SO-CALLED UN COMMAND," ATTACKING THE SOUTH KOREAN DICTATORSHIP AND ACCUSING THE US OF INTERVENTION IN THE AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY AND OF RAISING THE LEVEL OF TENSION IN THE AREA.

2. BASED ON LIMITED LOCAL CONTACTS, WE EXTRAPOLATE THAT THOSE WHO HAVE FOCUSED ON THE INCIDENT WERE SHOCKED BY THE BARBARIC NATURE OF THE NORTH KOREAN ATTACK (A RELATIVELY LENGTHY FILM CLIP OF THE ATTACK WAS SHOWN ON THE MAIN NATIONAL EVENING NEWSCAST SEVERAL DAYS AFTER IT OCCURRED AND PICTURES WERE PUBLISHED IN MOST NEWSPAPERS). AT THE SAME TIME, AT LEAST SOME SEEM TO HAVE SEEN

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SUBSEQUENT AMERICAN MOVES AS A DEMONSTRATION THAT THE US IS PREPARED

TO LIVE UP TO ITS OBLIGATIONS AND THAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF TAKING
STRONG AND DECISIVE ACTIONS EVEN IN THE MIDST OF A DIFFICULT
ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN.VEAUDRY

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